

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2526

To designate Greece as a program country for purposes of the visa waiver program established under section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 24, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York (for herself, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. SPACE, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. WEXLER, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. WATSON, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. LEE, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. CLAY, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. CROWLEY, and Ms. ESHOO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To designate Greece as a program country for purposes of the visa waiver program established under section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 The Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) The Founding Fathers of the United States
2 drew heavily on the political experience and philos-
3 ophy of ancient Greece in forming our representative
4 democracy.

5 (2) Greece played a major role in the World
6 War II struggle to protect freedom and democracy
7 through such bravery as was shown in the historic
8 Battle of Crete, which provided the Axis land war
9 with its first major setback, setting off a chain of
10 events that significantly affected the outcome of
11 World War II.

12 (3) Throughout the 20th century Greece was
13 one of three countries in the world, besides the
14 former British Empire, that allied with the United
15 States in every major international conflict.

16 (4) Greece has been a reliable partner in the
17 North Atlantic Treaty Organization since joining in
18 1952.

19 (5) In 1981, Greece became one of the 15 origi-
20 nal European Union member countries, and in Jan-
21 uary 2001, successfully acceded to the Eurozone.

22 (6) Among all candidate countries for entry in
23 the visa waiver program, Greece constitutes a sepa-
24 rate and unique case in that it is the only country,

1 among the candidates, that meets all technical re-
2 quirements for inclusion in the program.

3 (7) Greece requires only a valid passport for
4 American citizens visiting it and not a visa.

5 (8) Greece has less than the maximum allow-
6 able 3 percent rate for refusals of U.S. non-immi-
7 grant visitor visa applications.

8 (9) As of January 1, 2007, Greek passports
9 issued prior to January 1, 2006, are no longer valid
10 for travel. Therefore, Greek nationals are traveling
11 with new, machine-readable passports that are pro-
12 duced using state-of-the-art technology (biometrics)
13 to meet the highest possible security standards and
14 specifications.

15 (10) Greece is one of fifteen European nations
16 accepted as a Schengen country which allows for
17 travel through Europe as if you are traveling
18 throughout the United States. Greece is the only
19 Schengen country excluded from participating in the
20 visa waiver program.

21 (11) Countries included in the visa waiver pro-
22 gram with similar demographics and economic rela-
23 tions with the United States as Greece have 50 per-
24 cent more visitors to the United States due to their
25 visa waiver status.

1 (12) More than 50,000 Greek citizens visit the
2 United States each year.

3 (13) There are 1.3 million American citizens of
4 Greek ancestry residing in the United States.

5 (14) The Secretary of Homeland Security and
6 the Secretary of State administer the visa waiver
7 program, which allows citizens from 27 countries, in-
8 cluding all of the original 15 European Union mem-
9 bers except Greece, to visit the United States as
10 tourists without visas.

11 **SEC. 2. DESIGNATING GREECE A VISA WAIVER PROGRAM**
12 **COUNTRY.**

13 Effective on the date of the enactment of this Act,
14 and notwithstanding section 217(c) of the Immigration
15 and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1187(c)), Greece shall be
16 deemed a designated program country for purposes of the
17 visa waiver program established under section 217 of such
18 Act.

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